



THE LIFE WE NEED

Today we're going to look at a Jesus-promise that deals with, well, probably the biggest subject of all, really: life itself. And it seems an appropriate theme, especially as we're still in the wake of Good Friday and Resurrection Day:

Psalm 16

Ask people what life is all about, and you'd probably find a lot of commonality, but people's interests, circumstances, and personalities are likely to produce some variations, too. E.g. for the more romantically inclined, it might be finding that perfect 'someone'. For those with a more familial focus, it might be having kids or spending time with family. For the more business-minded it might be building that career. For those of a more scientific bent it might be perpetuating the human species. For the more experiential it might be ticking off that bucket list.

But ask them: "Would you like to be able to live the best life possible?" the answer will almost certainly be 'yes.' It would be unanimous. So where can we find that life?

1) It's Found In Loving God. In vs2 David says, "You are my Lord; apart from You I have no good thing." David is acknowledging that all the blessings he enjoys come from one source – God. But there's a bit more being said here, I think. David is also saying that it's God who helps him make sense of those things, helps him keep those things in perspective, helps

him remember what's most important. He's saying, "God, you have blessed me with so much – but nothing compares to You." And that is the key to living the life that God has for us.

Now, let's face it, not everyone sees things in this way. And that was true of David's time, too. Hence why he says, "As for the holy ones who are in the land, and the nobles in whom all delight, I said, 'The sorrows of those who run after another thing will increase,'" etc. Why? Because that 'other thing' doesn't satisfy; doesn't do the job.

Jesus put it this way, in Luke 14:26: "If anyone does not hate his father or mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be My disciple." All of which sounds shocking, until you realise that Jesus is exaggerating for effect. And the point He's making is this: for Him to do His work in us, we need to put Him first, above all else. Because having a wife doesn't make me the best husband I can be; having kids doesn't make me the best dad I can be; having parents doesn't make me the best son I can be. Jesus does.

2) It's Found In Serving God. In vs5-6 David again recognises that God has been good to him, but specifically, that God has a plan for him. He refers to his 'portion' and 'cup', which are symbolic ways of referring to the same thing: God's plan for a person's life. You can see it in Psalm 23, in Habakkuk 2:16 – and in Jesus' words to His disciples in Matthew 20:22.

So David is talking about more than himself here: he's talking about his 'lot', his place in this world, and his inheritance. Not just what he's received, but what he's going to do with it, what he's going to leave behind. Because the reality is, we all leave something behind, right? A legacy; a footprint; an impression. How can we ensure that we leave this world a better place than we entered it? The key is vs7-8: to live a life that shouts praise to God - and encourage others to want to do so. Because if this world is going to be fixed – and I believe that ultimately, it will be – it will only happen with and because of Jesus. Even Ricky Gervais, who's not exactly a fan of religious belief, has to acknowledge that Jesus' teachings are worth abiding by (interesting that the most worthwhile things I have ever heard Gervais say are when He's quoting the One he doesn't believe in. Ironic that).

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Let your light so shine before people, that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). When you make God's will *your* will, it impacts how you think, speak, and act. And how the world does, too.

3) It's Found In Trusting God. Now you might be wondering, "Hang on Steve – this is one of those 'Jesus-promises', you said. So where's the promise?" Well, at this point, David goes all future-tense and starts to look beyond himself. Look at vs9-10.

Now these words were never true of King David: he died and was buried in Jerusalem, and was still there 1000 years later – which, by the way, is the exact point Simon Peter makes when he quotes this psalm on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. But David is looking beyond himself: he's looking at his

royal line, and he's saying, "You're not going to let my legacy die, God: You won't let it rot in the grave. Because a future 'Son of David', a future King of Israel, is coming, and yes, He's going to die ... but He's not going to stay that way!"

And who's the King? Jesus is!

And it's because David was looking forward to Jesus that he was able to say what he says in vs11. It's because we look *back* to Jesus that we can say it, too.

So life, true life, eternal life, can only be found in trusting God. But we're not just talking 'hereafter' – we're talking 'herenow.' God has placed eternity in our hearts, as Ecclesiastes 3 puts it, because we need it. Because there will come a time for all of us when the only way we can function *now* is to know there's something better coming.

I.e. we need a future tense. We need an empty tomb.

Hand It Over

So to truly discover the life we need, we need to love, serve and trust God. To be specific, we need to follow Jesus. As Jesus Himself put it, "I have come that they might have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10).

Now you might be listening to this and thinking, "I thought I understood what life is about, what *my* life is about, and now ... I don't." Then again, you may be thinking, "I don't think I ever knew to start with!" Listen, you will never truly grasp the meaning of your existence until you surrender that existence to the Lord of Life Himself – the One who gave you life in the first place, and gave His life for you.

Until you hand your life over to Jesus.

So I'm going to invite you to do that now. Let's pray.

*Jesus, Lord of Life, help me to love You
Jesus, Lord of Life, help me to serve You
Jesus, Lord of Life, help me to trust You
And grant me the life that only You can give.*